

# WHERE MANY NATIONS CLASH

## FALLEN NATIONS

The Most Disputed Tract of Land Under the Sun, Where Austrian and Italian, Slav and Magyar Have Quarreled For 500 Years by the Beautiful Shore of the Adriatic and Where, at the End of the War, the Peace Congress Will Find One of the Hardest Knots in Its Tangled Problem.

By JAMES MORGAN.

Mr. Morgan sketches today the extraordinary jumble of races and National ambitions along the coast lands of the picturesque Adriatic, where Italy has taken up the sword for "Italia Irredenta," and where three other nationalities dispute her title, and he describes the hard problem there that the war cannot possibly solve.

Another article in this series of sketches of the fallen Nations will be published next Sunday.

One day when these war clouds were gathering above a world that yet dwelt in a fool's paradise of armed peace, I saw an Italian airship of the Zeppelin type circle for a moment about the campanile of St. Mark's in Venice and then sail away beyond the Lido and over the Adriatic toward the Austrian coast. But my companion had been quick to press a camera button and had caught for me a snap-shot photograph of that interesting aerial maneuver in the impending conflict between Italy and Austria.

For it is a fair supposition now that the aviator was starting on a reconnaissance of the fallen nation of Italians—Italia Irredenta—which lies only fifty or sixty miles away on the opposite shore. At any rate, he steered the course which soon was to become a path of war in the sky. And out of the blue horizon to which I watched him fly, Venice lately has seen so many Austrian Zeppelins coming to pay return visits that she has found it prudent to stable the bronze horses of St. Mark's in bomb-proof quarters. Forewarned by her experience with Napoleon, who abducted her prancing steeds and tethered them in his palace yard at Paris, she is not going to let them be blown up now by the hated Tedesco. And that is almost as unpleasant a name for the Austrian in Italy as "boche" is for the German in France.

Those bronze horses are precious not alone because they are the only horses in a city whose streets are water. They are the proud trophies of an era when, without a horse, the web-foot town conquered an Empire and when the Adriatic was only a Venetian canal.

But as the islanders have sat all summer about the little marble-top tables in the great square of St. Mark's wondering over their coffee how much longer it was going to take the Italian Army to get into Trieste, they still saw three reminders of the old imperial days. These are the graceful flagstaves before the ancient church, from which once floated the banners of three distant and glorious States in subjection to Venice—Greece, Cyprus and Crete.

But the most ardent Irredentists do not insist on reclaiming the Greek kingdom. Their object and the object of Italy in the war is to deliver the "Italians of the Trentino and the Adriatic from the thralldom of the Hapsburgs.

### A Most Disputed Land.

I venture to say that the northern coast of the Adriatic is the most disputed tract of land under the sun. There it lies on the border of the sea flowing between Greece and Rome, the oldest centers of European civilization. Yet today there is not as clear a title to it as to the banks of the Nile in darkest Africa. After 2,500 years of warring over it, the ownership of it is in question. And now again this same old boundary quarrel has brought on another war. This comes of writing title deeds with sword and blood.

Even as an Italian army at the top was battling to establish the claim of Italy to the disputed territory, the Serbians at the lower end were in a death struggle to make good the claim of the Serbs. Meanwhile Austria and Hungary divided the actual possession of it, and those inveterate claim jumpers, the Hapsburgs, played both ends toward the middle, with nine points of the game in their favor.

It is a shore cumbered with fallen nations and strewn with the wrecks of empires, which have been pounded to pieces on its jagged rocks. As your steamer warily dodges about on its course among the 600 islands which litter the Adriatic and you gaze at the dagger-like peaks and castled capes of the mainland, you feel as if the fury of nature had only been emulated by man on the Dalmatian coast, where the population forever has been torn to shreds between nations and creeds as unrelenting and fierce in their mad strife as the elements themselves.

At Spalato, the palace which Diocletian erected on his native shore recalls the age when an Emperor ruled the Roman world from Dalmatia. Everywhere the still majestic wrecks of Roman temples testify to a havoc wrought by hu-

man passions as much as by time and age.

### Passing the Title.

After Rome fell two Italian towns, Genoa and Venice, savagely fought for the prize, and the island of Curzola rises from the Adriatic to contradict the assumption that gas battles are a 20th century invention of the Prussian general staff. For in that old naval engagement off Curzola in 1298 the Genoese blinded the galley slaves of Venice with lime powder.

In the end the Venetians won the trident, and over moldy, crumbling gateways to languishing Dalmatian towns the battered lion of St. Mark's keeps alive the memory of the dead Empire of Venice. For more than 200 years the Venetian galleys breasted the waves of Mahometism sweeping in from Asia. They were the wooden walls of Christendom. The Turk might plant the Crescent on the top of the mountains which rise from the Adriatic, but the Cross never was lowered down by the nearby shore.

At her climax Venice reigned not only over Dalmatia, but clear to the Dardanelles. Ragusa almost alone kept its independence from the Doge, and its adventurous fleet was so celebrated that a "Ragusea," afterward twisted into "argosy," gave a universal name to the richly laden merchantman. After that strange little city by the sea had maintained its republic for 600 years against Venetians, Turks, Austrians and all comers, it fell at a scratch of Napoleon's pen in 1809.

The Adriatic never was an Italian or Venetian lake. For Austria held Trieste and Hungary held Fiume in the golden age of Venice. From those forts the Hapsburgs worked their way down the coast and salvaged the wreckage of the Venetian Empire.

But it remained for Napoleon to confirm the Hapsburg title to Dalmatia. When, at his stern command, the lion of St. Mark's "bit the dust," he gave that strange strip of coast-land to Austria in 1797 as a consolation prize for the land he took from her in Italy. Next he snatched it back at Austerlitz in 1805, and bestowed on Marshal Soult, his chief lieutenant in that battle, the title of Duke of Dalmatia. Another victory over Austria, at Wagram in 1809, gave him the entire shore, from Trieste down, and he formed it into the Kingdom of Illyria, which he wore in his crown until his overthrow, when the Hapsburgs again picked up Dalmatia.

### Italy in Austria.

Outwardly the coast towns remain distinctly Italian. Italy is stamped on

their architecture. Their stony little squares and narrow streets winding up from the water all bear Italian names. Italians control the business and the wealth of the shore, and Italian is the speech of trade and fashion.

Even when I went to the only seaport of Austria proper, although I sailed under the Austrian flag, the ship was owned, commanded and manned by Italians, and at Trieste I entered a new harbor, named in Italian for the Austrian Emperor, Porto Nuovo di Francesco Giuseppe Primo. I found Italians everywhere and doing everything, except carrying the baggage, which job was left to the Slavs. Not an Austrian disclosed himself with his German guttural.

Streets and railway stations, churches, museums and theaters, banks and stores were all christened in Italian. Austrian heroes, including Maximilian of Mexico, stood in bronze erected by the Austrian government in Italian piazzas. Yet Trieste has been held by Austria since 1882, save for only the few years when it was Napoleon's prize in battle.

Fiume is hardly less Italian, although it is the only port of Hungary. For many centuries it, too, has been under Hapsburg rule, but without losing its native character.

Much the same thing is true of that entire littoral. From top to bottom the very coast of Austria-Hungary remains almost as alien to the Austrian and Hungarian as if it were divided by seas from the ruling land, and if it were in India or South Africa.

### In the Land of the Slav.

When one goes to Trieste or Fiume he thinks he is going to Austria-Hungary, but he finds he has landed in Italy. Quite another surprise awaits him when he takes a train out of either of those cities.

Suppose he is going to Vienna or Budapest. Almost at the first station from Trieste or Fiume his ear and his eye tell him that he has left Italy wholly behind him at the shore. If unwarned he naturally might assume that he had entered the real Austria or the true Hungary. But he is still far from either.

From Fiume it is all of 200 miles on the Budapest road to the first really Hungarian or Magyar town, and it is nearly as far from Trieste in a Vienna train to the nearest Austrian or Teutonic village. In all that wide tract between the sea and the Drave the people are almost wholly Slavs, as Slavic in their faces and their speech as the Poles or the Russians.

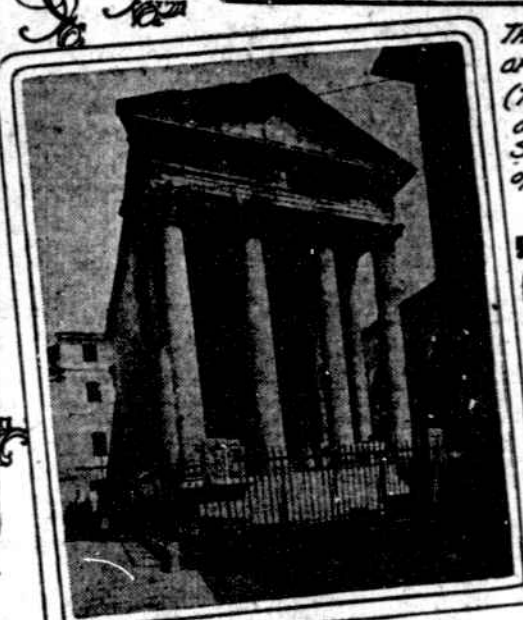
Without a break, this land of the Jugoslavs or Southern Slavs stretches in the north from the Julian Alps down to the



THE LION OF ST. MARK OVER THE GATE OF ZARA, CAPITAL OF DALMATIA, SET UP WHEN VENICE RULED THE SHORE



CITY HALL OF TRIESTE, WHERE ITALIANS RULE AUSTRIA'S ONLY SEA PORT



TEMPLE OF AUGUSTUS AT POLA, AUSTRIA'S NAVAL BASE, ERECTED WHEN ROME RULED THE SHORE

Serbian frontier at Belgrade, where it is joined by the kingdom of their brother Serbs. Through this wholly foreign nation the Austrians and Hungarians must pass on their way to the sea, and down there the Italians hold sway.

The two ruling races of Austria-Hungary really occupy only a strip from 100 to 200 miles wide, running through the center of the empire, with the Northern Slavs above them in Bohemia and Galicia and the Southern Slavs below them in the coast provinces. Or let me liken the empire to a pie, whereof the Slavs are the upper and lower crusts, the Germans and Magyars the filling and the Italians the frosting. But, never forget, the Hapsburgs hold the knife and fork!

### Aliens After 1,200 Years.

In the southern family of the Slavs, the Slovenes, numbering about 1,200,000, hold possession of the Austrian province of Carinthia and overflow into the neighboring provinces of Styria, Carinthia, Coastland and Istria, as well as into Hungary. In the Austrian kingdom of Dalmatia 96 per cent of the population is Serbo-Croatian, and there are in all more than 600,000 members of this branch of the Slavs in Austria. There are many more in Hungary where 51 per cent of the 2,500,000 population of Croatia-Slavonia are Serbo-Croats, who boast a grand total of 5,700,000 for the entire Empire, including Bosnia.

These people have for 1,200 years and more dwelt just where they are today. The Slovenes were on the ground before there was an Austria or a Hapsburg crown, and the Serbo-Croats were in Hungary before there was a Hungary and before the Magyars emerged from the wilds. They proudly cherish the memory of the centuries when they held their place among the Nations as the United Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, and as grim reminders of their fallen Nation they jealously preserve at Agram the pavement whereon their last King was bound to the stake and burned alive.

Nor are the southern Slavs a dwindling race. This notwithstanding the losses by emigration. There are said to be nearly 150,000 Slovenes and 350,000 Serbo-Croats in the United States. There you have a significant contrast between the Slavs under the rule of Austria-Hungary and their brethren, who have their own government in Serbia, where there is no emigration.

In spite of that drain upon them, the Slavs in the empire are steadily and surely encroaching upon the peoples about them. Year by year they are stealing down upon the Italians along the coast and creeping up into Austria-Hungary. The city of Marburg, over forty miles from Vienna, is becoming less and less German and more and more an outpost of the Slovenes. Over in Hungary the Serbo-Croats have crossed the Danube in their slow and irresistible advance on Budapest.

Everywhere they are conquering with their tongues. Like all Slavs, they have the gift of speech and they are the lin-

guists of the South. If a tradesman needs a man who speaks the four languages of that polyglot region the Slav gets the job, crowding out the monolingual German, Italian or Magyar applicant.

### Walls of Hatred.

Throughout centuries of contact these southern Slavs have been strangely proof against both German and Magyar influence. When they yielded to any alien environment it was Italian. For long the more progressive among them looked to the Italian shore as a source of education and civilization. But with the rise of Serbia as an independent nation there came a revival of pride and culture among the Serbo-Croats. Agram, the old Croatian capital, has become again their intellectual center, and Serbian now is their literary language. It is supplanting German, Magyar and Italian in the public schools. The races really are drawing apart rather than growing together. A Croat hates a Magyar above all other hatreds. This is because the Magyars not only overthrew the Croatian kingdom, but also have been trying for 700 years to Magyarize the fallen nation.

The latest effort in that direction took the form of selling to every railway station the Magyar name for the town. For a community down there has at least three names, the German, the Magyar and the Croatian. But a Croat would choke if he uttered any other name than his own. And when the Hungarian government put up those Magyar signboards there was for a time a serious insurrection.

The people also blame the wretched poverty of Croatia on its overlords at Budapest, where the Croats naturally have only a small representation and no hand in spending their onerous taxes. "Our pockets," they say, "are in the trousers of the Magyars."

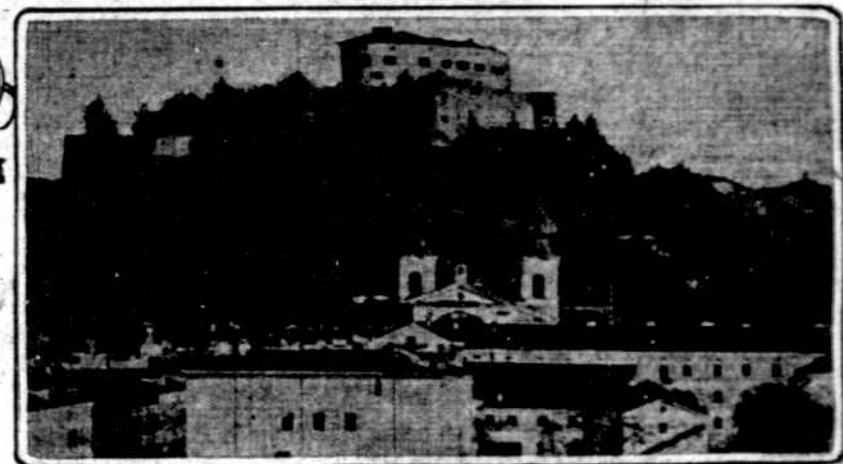
The Italian ranks only second in the enmity and the suspicion of the Croat. There was a bond of sympathy between the two neighboring peoples while they shared a common misfortune. But with the United Italy reviving the hopes of the Italians in the empire and with the Serbo-Croat revival, their new ambitions clashed and they entered upon divergent paths.

The Croat particularly resents the claim of the Italians to the Adriatic coast. The Slavs living there have no desire to change foreign yokes. Some of them have grown so disagreeable toward the Italians as to hold noisy celebrations on the anniversary of the battle of Lissa in 1866, when the Italian navy was smashed off that shore by the fleet of Austria-Hungary. Continually they struggle to crowd the Italians out of the municipal offices and the Italian language out of the schools of Dalmatia.

As proof that the coast does not belong to the Italians, they point to the fact that the Slavs now control all of the municipal governments except three, Trieste, Fiume and Zara. At Spalato the Croats have gone so far as to refuse to let Italian companies play in the Municipal Theatre. And since there is no



THE AIRSHIP CIRCLING THE CAMPANILE AT VENICE



THE CASTLE HILL AT GORIZIA, FOR MANY WEEKS UNDER FIRE OF ITALIAN GUNS

### Grist for the Hapsburgs.

All these racial feuds are grist for the Hapsburg mill. The more the Croats hate the Magyars and Italians the less they will hate the Austrians. And always the strength of the Austrian monarchy has been in the weakness of a divided people.

In the great Hungarian revolt against Francis Joseph—how strange that this man who was the central figure in that revolution of 1848 should be a principal in this war of 1915—the Serbo-Croats turned upon the Hungarians and fought for the young emperor. The chieftain of their army, Jellachich, has a statue at Agram, and he remains the national hero of Croatia.

But when the time came to make a trade with the Hungarians, the Crown, of course, sacrificed the loyal Croats and coldly delivered them over to Hungary, of which kingdom they have been a suspected and discontented province since 1868. In the midst of one of their frequent agitations they appealed in 1903 to Francis Joseph for an audience and a hearing, but he refused to receive their deputation. The Hapsburg throne does not trust itself to the friendship of the subject races, but thrives on their enmities toward one another.

This sinister policy is not failing the Empire in the great war today, when the loyalty of the Croatian troops has stood the test on every front. Austria could afford to trust them to fight the Russians or the Serbs, for those Slavs are of a different religious faith. Of course, they could be trusted to fight the Italians, since Italy is claiming land that they themselves claim.

The Hapsburgs do not look like a race of humorists, but there is a grim joke in the selection of a Croatian general to command the army that has been so stubbornly holding its ground on the Isonzo River and the Gorizia front against the Italian army coming to deliver the Adriatic shore from its bondage to Francis Joseph. The Croatian commander and every Croat in the ranks could be relied on to defend the Austrian lines with all the zeal of men defending their homes from an invader.

### What Italy Wants.

As yet the Italian advance has not really entered the land of the Slav. Although Gorizia has many Slovenian inhabitants, it is hardly less Italian than the towns which Victor Emmanuel's army left behind it in Italy when it crossed the Austrian frontier. Trieste, the first objective of the Italian Adriatic campaign, is almost as Italian as Gorizia. Italians form three-fourths of its 230,000 people, and more than half the entire population of the Istrian Peninsula is Italian. There are in all about 500,000 of them under Hapsburg rule, but half of these live up in the mountains of Trentino, away from the disputed land which is my subject today.

Germany has announced that she induced Austria to offer the government at Rome last winter all the Italian section

of Trentino, and also the head of the Adriatic down to the Isonzo River. But the Italian demand for Trieste was refused, because, as Von Buelow said, Trieste is the lung of Austria.

Italy's position in the war is different from that of any other of the warring countries. To her the great conflict rather is a local issue. Fighting only for a special object, thus far she has held strictly aloof from the general operations of her allies, not contributing a man nor a gun to any other front than her own.

Indeed she is still at peace with Germany. Or rather like Greece's "benevolent neutrality" toward the Entente, Italy has been astonishingly successful in preserving a sort of "benevolent neutrality" toward the German Empire. This provides an exceptional opportunity for a separate peace, independent of the Entente, or at least it provides a prolific source of rumors.

But the obstacle is Trieste. Austria has nothing more to offer now than before the war, except her only port. And when she retreats from the sea, she will retire from the business of empire.

### A Hard Knot.

It is a knotty problem, but the sword cannot cut the knot. It has been hacking at it for twenty centuries and more and the knot is harder now than ever. However it goes, the war will not settle the title to this land which has been so long in dispute.

If the Austrian side should win, the old question would be left wide open. If the allies should win, it is likely to give them more trouble than any other subject, with the possible exception of the destiny of Constantinople. When this bag is opened at the council table the victors will find it full of the seeds of dissension.

The most the allies could do would be to shut out both Austria and Hungary from the sea. That would only mean another war. And then the Slavic powers would have the right to object to Italy taking all she wants. But to do justice by the Serbo-Croats and other Slavs in Austria-Hungary would mean the dismemberment of that empire. And the frantic scramble for the pieces would quite upset again the balance of power.

No, war cannot cure in this case. It can only make new wounds and start new troubles. Drawing lines on the map will not avail. There are too many lines already drawn—lines of race, religion and nationality.

The true solution is to wipe out those divisions. But war cannot do that. Neither can imperialism. After living and working, suffering and dying side by side 1,000 years, after 200 years under Hapsburg rule, these peoples are strangers and enemies to one another. In Switzerland, in France, or in the United States, they would be fitted in a generation or two.

There is the object lesson. Only justice, education, freedom, can harmonize those clashing elements about the Adriatic, and quiet the long-disputed title to that shore.

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